

The Journey

April 2002

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

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Our Mission and Goals...

The
Chattahoochee
River National
Recreation Area
leads the
preservation and
protection of the
48-mile
Chattahoochee
River Corridor
from Buford Dam
to Peachtree
Creek, and its
associated natural
and cultural
resources, for the
benefit and
enjoyment of the
people.



Developing a management plan for the future

The purpose of the general management plan and environmental impact statement (GMP/EIS) is to present a plan for managing the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area for the next ten years. General management plans represent the broadest level of planning conducted by the National Park Service, and are intended to provide guidance for making informed decisions about the future of the park and specify resource conditions and visitor experiences to be achieved.

Understanding the General Management Plan



The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area offers visitors a variety of experiences.

The general management planning and environmental impact statement process involves many steps including:

- ◆ Identifying and confirming the park purpose, significance and mission goals
- ◆ Acknowledging special mandates, laws, and policies
- ◆ Involving the public and identifying the issues
 - Six public meetings were held to collect public input
 - Meetings were held with Area Planning and Greenspace Directors
 - Meetings were held with local, State and Federal agency representatives
- ◆ Developing the Alternatives

◆ Analyzing the Impacts

During fall 2000, the public was invited to voice their issues and to suggest their ideas for the future of the park. Over 200 written comments were received. A majority of the people who commented expressed concerns about access, facility

needs throughout the park, habitat preservation, environmental impacts, different types of use, trails, education, boundaries, fisheries and fishing, and enforcement. This information was then used to develop a range of desired future conditions, or prescriptions for the park. Based on the results of the planning process, three management alternatives were developed: Focus on Solitude, Centralized Access, and Expanded Use. In addition, the No Action alternative was also included for analysis. These alternatives were the result of mapping management prescriptions, or kinds and levels of management and use. Each of the alternatives for the park consists of multiple zones with different management prescriptions.

Developing alternatives for action

Alternative 1: Focus on Solitude.

This alternative would implement management programs that would minimize development in the park, and maximize the opportunity for visitors to experience solitude in natural settings. This approach would involve reducing or minimizing developments and recreational facilities within the newly acquired areas of the park, but would allow continued use of the existing facilities in the original named units to adhere to present practices. Visitor experiences would be highly facilitated through learning within the wide variety of environments available in the park.

Alternative 2: Centralized Access, the Preferred Alternative.

This alternative was selected by a process called, Choosing by Advantages, in which the advantages of each alternative are assigned a weighted numerical score. Based on the comparison of advantages, Centralized Access was selected as the preferred alternative.

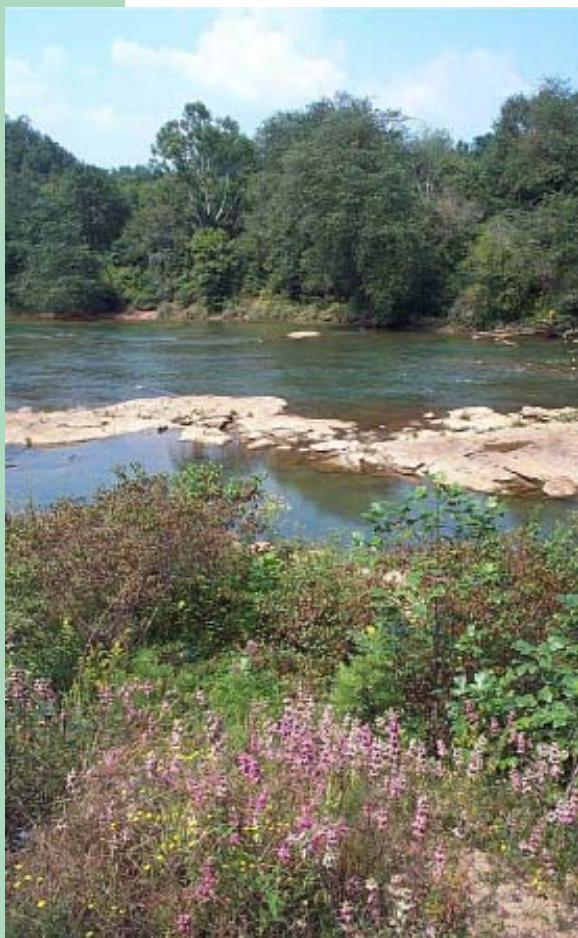
In this alternative, visitors would be drawn towards a system of relatively developed “hubs” in which administrative, commercial, and interpretive facilities would be located. These centralized areas would be strategically located in the north, central, and southern portions of the 48 mile-long park, and would optimize the visitor’s experience and understanding of the park. The hubs, at a minimum, would provide visitor information, rest rooms, parking lot and roads, trailheads, and access to the river. Trailheads and parking lots would be minimized outside of the hubs. The majority of the park would

be managed in its natural state, and access would be provided primarily via the hubs. Visitor activities in natural areas outside the hubs would be focused on achieving solitude in an urban environment. The centralized access alternative provides expanded services while simultaneously maintaining green space throughout the 10,000-acre park. The centers would be selected to better provide access. The centralized access points would provide put-ins or rental boating facilities for water access, direct visitor participation with the more active park recreation facilities, and on-site information materials on cultural and natural resources throughout the park. This strategy would enhance the opportunity for instituting park education programs at key regional locations, and enable the park to expand outreach to a growing population and service area, and increase connectivity.

At the
Chattahoochee
National Recreation Area you'll
enjoy the beauty of
nature while in the
midst of an urban
community.

discover...





Experience a sense of solitude and closeness to nature at Settles Bridge

The ruins of the Marietta Mills (right) on Sope Creek.

Alternative 3: Expanded Use

In this alternative, access would be expanded and distributed throughout the park, including newly acquired parcels. New facilities would be developed or existing facilities would be refurbished. Connectivity to existing neighborhoods would be optimized, providing similar visitor experiences throughout the park. Facilities for the park would be necessarily distributed throughout the 48 miles based upon availability of resources and local community support. Expanding use of the park to the area's population is a viable alternate concept relative to increased demand, and could be achieved within the limits imposed by the various laws, regulations, policies and mandates of the NPS. Implementation of this alternate concept would enable the NPS to expand use to the local visitors, including families, and day users from business parks, and neighborhoods. This alternative concept would provide an opportunity for a general broadening of acceptability and interest in the National Park System through increased use of the park.

Alternative 4: Continue Current Management / No Action.

This alternative would follow programming established by previous planning efforts under the 1989 General Management Plan. In 1999 the park's authorized boundary was expanded to 10,000 acres. Consequently, the current management concepts are no longer applicable. The no action alternative is therefore not a viable choice. Maps have been developed for each of the three alternatives and are included on our website.

What's happening in the next planning period

The planning team is currently developing the draft GMP/EIS. A web site was developed and is accessible at www.npsplanning.org. Newsletters will be posted on the web site to provide the public with information about the planning process and status of the document being prepared. The Draft GMP/EIS is expected to be available for public review in late spring 2002. Public meetings will be held to provide information on the alternatives and solicit public feedback on the Draft GMP/EIS.



Visitors to the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area can enjoy a river lit by the sun.



This Native American Rock Shelter (below) was inhabited for more than 5,000 years. This view is from the inside of the cave looking out.



To learn more...

This website contains additional information about the GMP/EIS. In addition to this newsletter, look for maps of the alternatives, an overview of trail planning efforts in the park, and links to related websites.



Sope Creek: it's one of the many wondrous sites you'll discover when you visit Chattahoochee National Recreation Area.

Journey to the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area



Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area